

rule 1.2

³⁰
31. (New) The method of claim ³⁰ wherein in the step of providing the preformed sleeve, the preformed sleeve further comprises an upper portion detachable via a detaching element in the preformed sleeve.

REMARKS

Prior to the first examination on the merits, Applicant hereby requests entry of the amendments made herein. Claims 1-2, 4-5, and 7-25 have been amended. ✓ Claim 3 has been cancelled. New Claims 26-31 have been added. Claims 1-2, and 4-31 are now pending in the application.

Claims 1-13, 22, 26 and 30 are similar to the claims 1, 13, 22, 26 and 56 already allowed in the parent case 09/621,605 except the preformed sleeves are defined as having a base portion having a tapered shape when in the flat condition as supported on page 7, lines 21-25 of the original specification, and as shown in FIGS. 1-7, for example.

The feature that the lower end of the preformed sleeve has a closed lower end has been removed as not being necessary to distinguish the claims over the art.

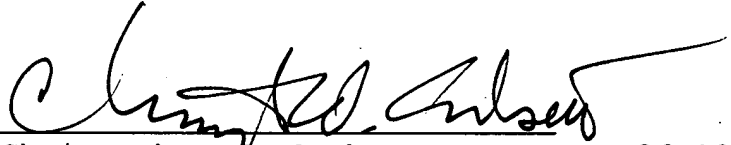
Marked-up Version of Claims

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made".

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully requests an examination on the merits.

Respectfully submitted,



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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims:

1. (Once Amended) A preformed sleeve for covering a pot [means] having an upper end, a lower end, and an outer peripheral surface, comprising:

a base portion having an upper end, a lower end [having a bottom], and an interior space when opened, the base portion initially having a flat condition prior to being opened for receiving the pot [means] into the interior space and having a tapered shape when in the flat condition;

a skirt portion extending from the upper end of the base portion; and

[expansion means comprising] a plurality of substantially unconnected, vertically oriented, expandable folds in the base portion, and wherein when the pot [means] is disposed within the interior space of the [sleeve] base portion and pressure is exerted on the base portion by the pot [means], the expandable folds in the base portion expand to cause the base portion to [substantially

conform to the shape and size of the pot means]
cover and surround the outer peripheral surface of
the pot.

2. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 1 further comprising an upper [sleeve] portion extending from the skirt portion and detachable therefrom via a detaching element therein.

4. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 1 further defined as constructed from a material having a thickness in a range of from about 0.1 [mils] mil to about 30 mils.

5. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 1 further defined as constructed from a material having a thickness in a range of from about 0.5 [mils] mil to about 10 mils.

7. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 1 further defined as constructed from a material selected from the group consisting of treated or untreated paper, [cellophane,] metal foil, [polymer] polymeric film, [non-polymer] non-polymeric film, cardboard, fiber, cloth, burlap, and laminations or combinations thereof.

8. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 1 wherein the plurality of expandable folds **[further comprises a plurality of] are selected from the group consisting of** pleats, **[a plurality of]** folds each having a z-shaped cross section, or **[a plurality of]** accordion-type folds.

9. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 1 further comprising **[an extended portion of the sleeve] a** portion for serving as a handle or support **[means] device**.

10. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 1 wherein the base portion has a drainage **[means therein] hole**.

11. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 1 wherein the plurality of folds **[in the extension means]** are continuous between the base portion and the skirt portion.

12. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 1 wherein the **[bottom of the]** lower end of the base portion is closed.

13. (Once Amended) A preformed sleeve for covering a pot **[means]** having an upper end, a lower end, and an outer peripheral surface, comprising:

a [base] lower portion having an upper end, a lower end having a bottom, and an interior space when opened, the [base] lower portion initially having a flat condition prior to being opened for receiving the pot [means] into the interior space and having a tapered shape when in the flat condition;

[a skirt portion extending from the upper end of the base portion;]

[a detachable] an upper [sleeve] portion extending [beyond] from the [skirt] lower portion and which is [sized to substantially surround and enclose a floral grouping] detachable therefrom via a detaching element; and

[expansion means comprising] a plurality of substantially unconnected vertically oriented, expandable folds in the [base] lower portion and wherein when the pot [means] is disposed within the interior space of the [sleeve] lower portion and pressure is exerted on the [base] lower portion by the pot [means], the expandable folds in the [base] lower portion expand to cause the base portion to [substantially conform to the

shape and size of the pot means] cover and surround at least a portion of the outer peripheral surface of the pot.

14. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 13 wherein the [base] upper portion is further defined as being sized to substantially [cover the outer peripheral surface of the pot means] surround and enclose a floral disposed within the pot.

15. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 13 further defined as constructed from a material having a thickness in a range of from about 0.1 [mils] mil to about 30 mils.

16. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 13 further defined as constructed from a material selected from the group consisting of treated or untreated paper, [cellophane,] metal foil, [polymer] polymeric film, [non-polymer] non-polymeric film, cardboard, fiber, cloth, burlap, and laminations or combinations thereof.

17. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 13 wherein the [plurality of] extendable folds [further comprises a plurality of] are selected from the group consisting of pleats,

[a plurality of] folds each having a z-shaped cross section, or
[a plurality of] accordion-type folds.

18. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 13 further comprising [an extended portion of the sleeve] a portion for serving as a handle or support [means] device.

19. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 13 wherein the [base] lower portion has a drainage [means therein] hole.

20. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 13 wherein the plurality of extendable folds [in the extension means] are continuous [between the base portion and the skirt portion].

21. (Once Amended) The preformed sleeve of claim 13 wherein the bottom of the lower end of the [base] lower portion is closed.

22. (Once Amended) A method of covering a pot [means]
having an upper end, a lower end, and an outer peripheral surface, comprising the steps of:

providing a preformed sleeve comprising:

a base portion having an upper end, a lower end [having
a bottom], and an interior space when opened, the

base portion initially having a flat condition prior to being opened for receiving the pot [means] into the interior space and having a tapered shape when in the flat condition, a skirt portion extending from the upper end of the base portion, and

[expansion means comprising] a plurality of

substantially unconnected, vertically oriented, expandable folds in the base portion; and disposing the pot [means] into the interior space of the [sleeve] base portion wherein pressure is exerted upon the base portion by the pot [means] causing the expandable folds in the base portion to expand to cause the base portion to [substantially conform to the shape and size of the pot means] cover and surround at least a portion of the outer peripheral surface of the pot.

23. (Once Amended) The method of claim 20 wherein in the step of providing a preformed sleeve, the preformed sleeve further comprises an upper [sleeve] portion extending from the

skirt portion and which is detachable therefrom via a detaching element.

24. (Once Amended) The method of claim 20 wherein in the step of providing a preformed sleeve the plurality of expandable folds [in the expansion means] are continuous between the base portion and the skirt portion.

25. (Once Amended) The method of claim [20] 23 wherein in the step of providing the preformed sleeve [further comprises a detachable] the upper [sleeve] portion [which extends beyond the skirt portion for] is sized to substantially [enclosing] surround and enclose a floral grouping disposed within the pot [means].